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A Masque
The Church Victorious
Through Love

by
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PLACE: *The House of God.*

TIME: *Now.*

CHARACTERS

THE CHURCH

AN ANGEL

LOVE

FAITH

KNOWLEDGE

WAR

MUSIC

OPPORTUNITY

WEALTH

SELF-SACRIFICE

FAMINE

DEATH

Chorus of women and girls from many lands.

The curtain rises on the Church sitting on a slightly raised dais with the Angel standing at the door.

The time required for development is just one hour.

A Masque

The Church Victorious Through Love

THE CHURCH

As some gray pilgrim of the Middle Age
I face each risen day, or bright or dull,
Tempestuous or calm, and pray my soul
Long leagues upon the way that souls must take
Before they reach that far and happy land
Whose shadow-bounded reaches we divine.
But in our longing for immortal life,
Mid dust of earth, in heat and cold and rain,
O'er far-horized heights, through narrow vales,
Accompanied of glowing sun, or cloud,
Of one clear star, or of the circling host,
The Church must journey on through aging time,
But not to find an empty, open tomb
As one who sought the garden sepulchre.
I see the Kingdom of the Risen One
Within. Long, long and toilsome is the way.
Unceasing must the struggle onward be,
But there's no other way the Church may win
The glorious victory.

THE ANGEL

There is no other way. But thou hast friends;
Hast thou not Faith and Hope and Charity
And Love, who serves thee and through thee, the Lord?

CHURCH

Good Angel, what thou sayest to me is true
But there are those who call me cold and formal
And unresponsive to the great world's need.
It is not true and yet I know I fail,
With sorrow I confess I often fail
To win the friendship of the hostile world.
She hates me tho I give to her my best.
Good Angel, tell me what can I do more?

OPPORTUNITY

(Rushes in interrupting)

Great Church, behold me, Opportunity,
Eternal, ever-present, here and now.
I saw just now the world, O mighty Church,

Like some poor hunted beast upon the plain
Flying like mad before grim-visaged War,
His bloody sword unsheathed to strike her down.
Behind them shrieked gaunt Famine like a ghost,
And after her Disease and Death flew fast
To catch the flying creature. This they did,
And beat her down, and stripped her to the bone,
There lies she faint and bleeding on the plain,
Dying for succor and relief. O Church,
Rush all thy servants to the wounded world
Ere it shall be too late.

CHURCH

Oh, not such haste!
Thou art forever rushing in, my friend,
To break my peaceful prayers and meditations.
Thou are too eager, Opportunity.
Hast thou no reverence, no discreet respect
For this my hallowed house and deep repose?
Thine ardent cry disturbs the quiet here.
Am I an ambulance with clamorous gong
To be forever tearing up and down
At thine alarms? Nay, Opportunity,
Leave me my peace, my 'dim religious light,'
My rapt devotions and my quiet ways.

OPPORTUNITY

What, wilt thou leave the world to die out there
Upon the plain alone and in the night?
It shall not be. If thou dost tarry long
I go to Industry or Charity,
To anyone, to any place, where I
Can find the help and willingness to serve
In this emergency. Farewell, I go!

CHURCH

Stay, eager and impulsive one. I send
To answer thy behest again for this
My ever-needy neighbor. Who goes for me?
Whom shall I send? Who best can service give
To help this stricken traveller on the plain?

OPPORTUNITY

O Church! Send Knowledge, Wealth, thy Eloquence,
Faith, Charity, and blest Self-Sacrifice.
Send all thy servants, now, just now, I beg,
For all are needed. Bid them hurry on
To find and save the dying world.

CHURCH

Go, Opportunity, and call my servants.

Exit Opportunity

ANGEL

Surely, O Mother Church, thou wilt send Love?
With her sweet Gospel and her tender hands?

CHURCH

It is no time for such a gentle soul.
This is a day for power and for force.
Love cannot fight with cruel War and Death.
She hath no war-like weapons in her hands,
Hath never learned to use the means of force.
Her gentle Gospel fails to meet such need.
Let these more wise and potent servants go
And you shall see that they will save the world.

Enter Opportunity with Knowledge, Wealth, Eloquence, Faith and Self-Sacrifice.

CHURCH

Welcome, my train of servants true and splendid,
Long have ye served me and my neighbor world.
But now I have the greatest task for you.
The world lies yonder beaten down and bruised.
Her many wounds are voices crying out
For vengeance and for healing. Go you now
And rescue her and bring her broken body
Here to this home and haven of true peace.

KNOWLEDGE

I bring my gift of learning unto thee.
Use it as thou seest best. I know the world.
With all the means that Science can invent
I've studied her great ways and needs and manners,
And for her hurt I have the sovereign cure.

CHURCH

I gladly take thy gift, for without Knowledge
I am blind.

WEALTH

I come to thee, O Church, and at thy feet
Lay all my treasure for thy many tasks
In faithful service of humanity.
Who better knows than thou, that kindness costs?
The Church's work is such an enterprise
As calls for coffers deep and large and many.
I'll carry with me all my bags of gold
To buy the world some healing and some joy.

CHURCH

Thy generous gift indeed is gladly welcomed,
Thy Gold can send my messengers afar
To every land and people.

ELOQUENCE

And I shall say such words of eloquence,
That she shall heed my fervent exhortations,
Lift up her downcast eyes to see the stars
Effulgent in her blackest hour of woe.
The glowing dawn will bring back hope to her
And joy will fill her heart with radiant noon!

CHURCH

I truly need thy gift, O Eloquence,
That honor may be given unto me
To tell to all the mysteries of the Gospel.

FAITH

I go to war with War and Death and Famine!
My conquering sword I here unsheath again!
How bright and sharp it is! What victories
God hath given me with this great brand.
His arm shall help me win another fight.
Once more with Him I'll break the mountains down!

CHURCH

O Faith, to be well-pleasing unto God.
Without thee is impossible.

SELF-SACRIFICE

I too, shall go for thee, O Mother Church,
And all I have is at thy service here.
To thee I bring the gift of Sacrifice.
And, thus, fulfill the prayer that Christ may build
His blessed Kingdom here.

CHURCH

A broken heart, a contrite spirit to God
Are sacrifices.

CHURCH

Go, my dear servants! God speed ye every one!
Go strike these enemies down and bring the world
Here to my quiet place of peace and rest
That she may find the healing for her hurt.

(All go out but Faith.)

ANGEL

O Mother Church, send Love also with them!

CHURCH

I tell you, nay. It is no time for Love.
The devil must be fought with his own fires.

Bright Angel, you shall see my servants fight
And quickly come triumphant over sin
Bringing the sad world here for remedy.

THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC

(Chanting behind the scene)

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

CHURCH

What song is this I hear? What spirit singing?
And what this most unworldly theme of love?
'Nothing without love'? A strange ideal.
But hark, it sings again!

MUSIC

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth! Love never faileth! Love never faileth!"

CHURCH

Love never faileth? No. It is not true!
Have I not loved the world long centuries
And failed to heal her hurt and save her soul?
While she has mocked and hated me; has slain
My saints and prophets; burned, and stoned, and sawn
Asunder my evangelists? Love fails!
And now again I send my servants forth
To aid my ever-needy, scornful neighbor.
But they are long in coming. They are late.
Why do they tarry? Why are they not here?

MUSIC

"Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully

even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. Follow after love!"

CHURCH

O, can it be that I have failed to love.
Have all my faith and works and charities
And martyrdoms and sacrifices failed?
I sadly grant that oftentimes I fail.
O, can it be that I have failed to love?

FAITH

O, Mother Church, I long to serve thee truly,
But cold thy heart and formal all thy ways
Until our sister Love comes near to thee.
She serves her Lord with gladness
And comes into His presence with a song.

ANGEL

We never bless, O Church, until we bleed!
Remember how thy Lord hath said to thee;
"Except a grain of wheat fall to the earth
And die; alone and by itself abideth;
But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.
He that his own life loves, shall lose it all;
He that his own life hates, shall keep it ever.
The man that serveth Me must follow Me;
And where I am, there shall my servant be.
And I, if I be lifted up from earth
Will draw all men unto myself." O Church,
All thy strong servants will return again
Defeated and without the wounded world.
Thou must thyself go out from these rapt halls.
Thou must forget thyself, and take thy cross,
Doff garments rich, and don the pilgrim's dress.
With book and staff in hand, and having shod
Thy feet with preparation of the gospel,
Go out, with Love, to save the broken world.
Thou shalt not save until beneath thy cross
Thou breakest!

(Shouts and sound of fighting without. Knowledge, Wealth, Eloquence, and Self-Sacrifice, come in dishevelled and pursued by War, Disease, Famine and Death.)

CHURCH

(Rising from her seat)

What means this riot in my sacred house?
This is not field for strife and sound of arms!
My servants, where is now the wounded world?
Have you not rescued her, and brought her here?

WAR

Nay, weakling queen. These warriors of thine,
Are children in my hard and skillful hands.
I scorn thee to thy face, Thou petty Queen.
What though thou mayest sing of Christian Soldiers
And chant "the sons of God go forth to war,"
They never shall the victim snatch from me.
Through hoary years I've mowed humanity down
And will again when it shall please my whim.
I flaunt you and your nursery squadrons!

FAMINE, DISEASE AND DEATH

(In chorus)

After War we follow fast.
What she leaves we catch at last.
How we hate all living men!
Over lonely moor and fen
In the darkness, in the night,
Ever in unwearied flight,
Bringing hunger, pain and woe
Everywhere we choose to go.
Little children are our prey,
How we frighten them from play!
We can break a woman's heart,
And make the tears to eyelids start!
Sorrow, woe and grief we bring,
And we hate all souls who sing!
For thee, O Church, we've only scorn
Now, and 'til the Doomsday morn!

OPPORTUNITY

(Rushes in interrupting and crying)

O Mother Church, out there upon the plain
The world lies swiftly dying in her woe.
Wilt thou not haste to heal and save her life?
O why art thou so slow to come?

ANGEL

Go thyself, O Church, and go with Love,
Stay not another moment from this task!

CHURCH

I will. I go in my dear Master's power
And with His love in duty to His word.
'Go' is His word. And I obey at last.
Call Love.

Angel exit.

MUSIC

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have
not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal."

Enter Angel with Love, who is clothed in white. She bears on her shoulder a
heavy cross.

CHURCH

O Love, I go with thee to save the world!

LOVE

"I am pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in my body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in my body. For I who live am always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal flesh. So then death worketh in me, but life in you."

Yes, I will go, as I am always going.
Take up this cross, O Church, and follow me.
Nor shall we two go out, but all together.
We must not go alone. Thy whole train comes.
Wealth, Knowledge, Eloquence, and Charity,
Self-Sacrifice and Faith. O every one
Is needed in Christ's service to the world!
There's not a hand or heart in all the land
But has its place with us, O Church, in work
To save the world, and glorify our Lord
Who bore His cross and died that we might live.
We go together, not alone. And each
Her helpful office shall fulfill with me.

Church takes up the cross from Love. Love leading, they begin to march. War, Famine, Disease, and Death sink and cower backwards to the exits. All go out except the Angel. As they go Music chants.

MUSIC

(Chanting)

"Love never faileth. Love never faileth. Follow after Love."

ANGEL

Now I see far down the way a company comes singing. And they are out of every land and every tongue and people. They march beneath the banner of the Lord, and they sing the love of Jesus Christ.

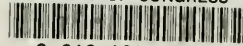
Women and children dressed in the costumes of many lands, march singing up through the audience, and on to the stage. As they go they sing, "The Church's One Foundation." The Church and Love lead the procession back to the stage, Knowledge, Wealth, Eloquence, Faith and Self-Sacrifice, follow Church and Love. Capital and Labor, come hand in hand, Immigrant and American. Bolshevik and Government. All the world. When all are on the stage.

CHURCH

Now know I that Love never faileth
And that all service without Love is vain.

Sing, sisters, sing.

With sweet melodious clamor fill the land
From east to west, from north and south, now let
The joyful summons ring and ring again,
And thanks be offered up
To God most High, and to His Christ
For His eternal Love.



ALL SING

"O Love that will not let me go."

MARGARET 8, 8, 8, 8, 6

A. L. Peace, 1885

1. O Love that wilt not let me go.... I rest my

wea-ry soul in Thee; I give Thee back the life I owe,

That in Thine o-cean depths its flow May rich-er, full-er be. A-men.

2 O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

3 O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

4 O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

G. Matheson, 1886

CURTAIN

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